



Oakland Raiders Transcript

Offensive Coordinator Greg Olson

Opening statement: "Alright guys, we had another opportunity to showcase some of our young players. Have a chance to evaluate some of them. We thought Chris Warren continued to do some good things. Obviously, there are things we can clean up. We still have to get that backup quarterback position solidified here in the couple of weeks, but overall it's been a good week. Looking forward to playing Green Bay. Questions?"

Q: What are you looking for specifically when you're trying to figure out the backup quarterback?

Coach Olson: "Yeah, I think everything is weighed differently. Certainly, from every drill we start with to individual drills to group drills to then the team drills, they're all graded differently. Each one of them has a little bit more weight. The more team situations carry more weight than the individual performance. Then you get into game situation, that carries the most weight. They get graded on the game reps that they had in the preseason and the team reps that they had in the training camp that we've had thus far. It's been a close battle. They've both done some good things. Certainly, we've seen some things that they both need to clean up. We'll continue to evaluate as we go forward."

Q: What have you seen from the guys who are competing to be the No. 3 receiver?

Coach Olson: "Well it's been good. Seth Roberts has been injured. So we haven't had a chance to see him a whole lot. Martavis [Bryant] has been in and out as well. A little inconsistent. That more than anything, we've seen a good battle inside with [Ryan] Switzer, has done a nice job. There's just a good battle there for the inside slot. We started out, we also played Jordy [Nelson] some in there at the [slot]. That's a position, again, we have to get solidified. We have to find more consistency at that spot right now going into the third game."

Q: What has Jordy Nelson brought to the receiver room?

Coach Olson: "Great leadership, really. Great leadership. He's a pro. How do you define a pro? He's a guy that just shows up and does his job every day and does it to the best of his ability. I think he's a great example for any of the younger players in terms of his preparation. Not only his preparation, but the performance aspect. It's one thing to prepare, but it's another to go out on the field and perform. He's done that over his career. I think that gives a good model for a lot of the younger receivers to look at."

Q: Do you see any of the young receivers gravitate toward him?

Coach Olson: "I think so. I think he has a personality that he's easy to approach. He's very approachable guy. Again, he's a natural leader that way. Not pretentious at all, and I think that the players in that room appreciate that. He doesn't hold himself above anybody. He's willing to give out any of the secrets that he's learned along the way. I think they all appreciate that. Not just the young players, but I know Coop [Amari Cooper], those guys all are real comfortable with Jordy. He's been a great acquisition for us, so I'm excited."

Q: How do you think Donald Penn has done in his small amount of practices? What are you looking for from him?

Coach Olson: "He's had a good week. He really looked very natural from the first day we put him out there. That was extremely encouraging because he hasn't played that position throughout his career, but he looked very natural there. I think we still have to get him in shape. He's been working out here after practice. I think our training staff and strength staff has been doing a good job with that. Just getting himself game ready. It's been a long time since Donald has played a game. It's been a long time since he's been able to practice a full practice. This week's been a lot about conditioning. He's having to play himself into shape. I think Tom Cable has also done a good job of monitoring that and monitoring his conditioning up to this point. As far as playing the position, again, he looked very comfortable there."



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Q: What about the dynamic between him and Kolton Miller?

Coach Olson: "Yeah, that's been...again, credit to Donald Penn for the way he's approached this change. The minute we talked with him about making the move, he was onboard with it. He's been onboard with it since the move has been made, which was day one. When that was proposed to him, he said, 'I'll do whatever it takes to help the team win.' Really says a lot about the man and the player. Again, you'll see him with Kolton, offering tips. Much like Jordy does with the wide receivers. Donald has played a lot at that position and played at a very high level, so I think his experience in that room has been very beneficial for the young tackles. Both [Brandon] Parker and Kolton."

Q: How are you instructing offensive players regarding the new tackling rule?

Coach Olson: "We've had the officials come in and present the rule change to us and showed us video. You read about it, they're saying that they're going to come back through again with another video, trying to explain that rule. It doesn't happen very often with offensive players. They'll see a lot of that lowering of the head other than the running back position, the ball carriers, and we've always talked to them about trying to lead with your face up. Really hasn't been a big issue, an emphasis on our side of the ball. We'll look forward to seeing a new tape and a new explanation of how they're going to call that when the regular season gets going."

Q: How do you fix the bad snaps we've seen in the preseason?

Coach Olson: "Yeah, that's been very disappointing. Really last week when you look at that, certainly there wasn't a lot of offense installed for that game plan against the Rams. However, anytime there's sloppy play, football is on the ground, false start penalties, that's the unacceptable part that you're seeing there. It doesn't matter if you're a first-year player or a veteran trying to keep your job, that's just unacceptable football. That was the disappointing [part] coming out of there. It wasn't so much the execution part of it, it was just the sloppy play. That was the disappointing part coming out of that game."

Q: How much do you need to see veteran running back like Marshawn Lynch or Doug Martin?

Coach Olson: "Well we had a good physical practice against Detroit and had some physical practices early in training camp. But I think we'll get out here in this third game here and we'll get those guys a chance to get hit. You go throughout training camp and you do a lot of thudding. We do a lot of ball security drills offensively for the running backs. Poking and prodding with different type drills. But until they get out on the field and actually get a live contact, I think it's a different mindset. We'll get those guys some carries. Get them a chance to get a couple of thuds and then we'll get them out."

Q: Head Coach Jon Gruden talks about consistency when talking about Bryant. Is that in terms of practice or grasping the playbook? Where do you need to see more consistency?

Coach Olson: "I think everywhere. From the meeting rooms to the practice field to the games. Just consistent level of performance. Again, it starts with the preparation. All these players get graded every day at practice as well as the games. It's just trying to element some of the dips in play. Certainly we know there's going to be some mistakes and there'll be a little bit of dips along the way, but the less that curve goes down then the better off we'll be. So, element those real low moments there with some of those guys. Again, it comes with experience. The more experience in the offense that they have I think the more consistent they'll have a chance to become."

Q: How familiar were you with Jared Cook and what has impressed you since coming here?

Coach Olson: "Well I knew the player. I never had a chance to work with Jared. But I've known different coaching circles, talked with different people about him. Always had a lot of respect for his game and the way he plays. That hadn't changed since I've been here. I think the guy has come to work every day. He's in a great mindset right now. I think he's enjoying himself. I think he's enjoying the team. I think he's enjoying the new offense and his role in this offense. He's been a pleasure to coach thus far. I see that continuing as we move far."



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Q: What are your impressions of David Sharpe thus far?

Coach Olson: "All of those guys in that second line, there's competition going on there. We're looking to find...Certainly, I think we're very comfortable with our starting five, but that six and seven, there's going to be some real competition for that gameday active roster. As well as that 10 or 11 that we will keep. So there's still great competition going on at that position. David is part of the competition, but he has some other guys there as well that are playing pretty well in that position as well."

Defensive Coordinator Paul Guenther

Q: Do you feel like you have a handle on the helmet rule?

Coach Guenther: "You know, I've talked to a lot of coaches on it. The guys get in funky positions. Sometimes, it's unavoidable to get those things and we just try to teach those players to keep the head out, don't duck the head. All you can do as a coach is keep re-going over those things and reassuring these guys to understand what the rules are. But, it's going to be hard, you know I saw one the other day where the guy was coming off the edge on a rush and ducked his head and they threw a flag. So, it's really all over the board with the (defensive backs) 'DBs', open field things. So, we just have to keep educating the players the best we can."

Q: When you looked at the Karl Joseph play in the contest against the Detroit Lions, were you understanding of the call or did you think that they needed to figure it out?

Coach Guenther: "I actually asked the official right after the play was over. I think sometimes when you hear the collision, it's just the natural tendency to throw the flag. When you go back and look at the film you can clearly see his head was to the side and it wasn't helmet-to-helmet or anything like that. I think someone told me there was 52 of them called in 33 preseason games. So, I understand that you're trying to make the game safer and we're all trying to do that, but at some point, it is football."

Q: What have you liked about what James Cowser has done these past two games?

Coach Guenther: "He's done a good job. He's playing linebacker, which is new for him in a 4-3 (defense). He's getting better than that, had an interception the other day. And he can edge rush, so he's a smart guy and the I always tell them, the more you can do to help us win, you'll be around here. He's doing a good job for us."

Q: How much of a benefit is it as a coach to have players who can guide them through learning the defense?

Coach Guenther: "Yeah, I think it's important. I walk by the locker room all the time and they're talking through some of the things. When you have guys that have been in the system and seen these things and games and different scenarios, it's always helpful to have guys in the locker room, on the field if something happens to understand what those adjustments may be and things that are going to come down the road as we get moving with this thing. So, it's important that we have those guys that are familiar with it, it's certainly helpful."

Q: Is P.J. Hall further along than you may have thought he would be given the jump in competition he has made from Sam Houston State?

Coach Guenther: "Well, you know, that was the question mark coming from a small school. Can he handle this level? Like I said, I studied inside pass rushers for a long time, the size, the strength, the speed, all the characteristics that you're looking for the three-technique for us on our defense. All those things match up. I always tell the coaches, when you're doing evaluations of the college players, don't look at the helmet, look at the player and see what he's doing. Obviously, he wasn't invited to the combine, but he did a real good job in his pro day, so no, I'm not surprised. I just think that initially, he got in here himself and realized, 'Man, I can play at a high level here.' Once he got his confidence built, I think the sky is the limit for him."



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Q: Was there a turning point or a point where it just lit up for Hall?

Coach Guenther: "You know, in the springs wearing shorts, it's hard for the d-line or the o-line to get a good gauge of what it's going to look like. I think the first couple days in pads where we were doing pass rush, you started to see the explosive get-off that he has and the movements that he has. And he's strong as an ox, so I think it was really early in training camp that I realized we have a special guy here."

Q: Did you see an increase in what you're looking at with Gareon Conley now that you have seen him in game action?

Coach Guenther: "Same thing with him, the more he plays, the more confidence he's going to get in all of those things, whether it be covering a guy, tackling a guy, whatever it is, blitzing, whatever it may be. He's feeling more confident in the system. The more he's out here, the more he's going to feel confident. Because, we're going to put him in positions at practice that, 'Hey, this is a one-on-one, this is your play to win.' He's been answering the bell."

Q: Has there been any discussions about potentially bringing in free agent George Iloka?

Coach Guenther: "No, I was kind of surprised they let him go. George has been a really good, steady player for them for a long time and really developed through the system inside and out. I've been really kind of concentrating on getting ready for this ball game and really evaluating the guys we have at safety. I like our safety group. I mean, we have a lot of different abilities back there, guys who can cover, guys who can hit and play the middle of the field. So, I'm really focused on getting those guys better."

Q: You got Arden Key in the game last week for a handful of snaps...

Coach Guenther: "He did okay. I think he was a little bit disappointed with a couple of his rushes. But, hey, it was his first NFL game, I said relax, go out there and do what you do. You try not to over coach those kinds of guys because Arden special at what he does, rushing the quarterback. So, hopefully he'll get some more snaps in this game and we'll have him ready for the first week."

Q: You rushed Key exclusively at right end and seven of his eight rushes were on third down, is that just a small example of your usage plan for him?

Coach Guenther: "I mean, he was coming off of that injury. We were just limiting his snaps to third down for that game, just because we didn't want to give him 35-40 snaps on the first game. That was the plan going in, get him in there on third downs and let him rush and then as we go to this next game, he'll play a little bit more."